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ABSTRACT

This publication provides suggestions for tech prep planning and program development throughout Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens County, South Carolina, school districts with the help of Partnership for Academic and Career Education (PACE) staff. Background assumptions are outlined first. Then, 16 planning components are listed to help individual districts plan and implement tech prep programs effectively. These include the following areas: identification of planning coordinators, definition of roles and responsibilities of district and PACE staff, definition of tech prep goals for the district, identification of academic and vocational courses that could be organized into a tech prep curriculum option, identification of curriculum gaps between secondary and postsecondary level, identification of courses for local curriculum development, planning of evaluation strategies, and identification of other components to support the tech prep program. Proposed outcomes for fully developed tech prep programs are listed, including the following: a coordinated, sequenced program of academic and career/vocational courses; new and/or enhanced academic courses involving applications from the targeted midlevel technology career clusters; Introduction to Technologies in grade 9; effective counseling components; ongoing inservice for faculty and staff; orientation for students and parents; and a tech prep scholarship program. Other contents are suggested overall planning goals for 1989-90 and a planning outline. (YLB)

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Partnership for Academic and Career Education
Coordinating Board - January 26, 1990

SUGGESTIONS FOR TECH PREP PLANNING

Background Assumptions

1. Tech Prep will be developed and implemented in accordance with each District's policies and requirements. Although similarities will occur across districts, Tech Prep programs will be individualized to meet the unique needs of each district.

2. In developing Tech Prep programs, PACE staff will consider themselves "district employees" to help ensure that Tech Prep is developed in ways that meet the needs, resources, and goals of each district. PACE staff will assist districts in program development while representing the overall goals established by the PACE Board.

3. PACE staff will advise and assist Tri-County Technical College faculty and staff in the development of postsecondary Tech Prep components and procedures ensuring that students experience a smooth transition from the secondary to postsecondary levels of the program.

Planning Components for Individual Districts

In order to plan and implement Tech Prep programs effectively, the following components are suggested*:

1. Identify planning coordinators at the district and/or school level. (Who are the individuals that the district wants PACE staff to work with in Tech Prep planning/development?)

2. Define roles and responsibilities of district and PACE staff in planning and developing Tech Prep.

3. Define Tech Prep goals for the District. (What does the district want Tech Prep to be when it's fully developed and implemented? The PACE role is to present various options from which appropriate long-range goals can be identified.)

4. Identify existing academic and vocational courses that could be organized into a Tech Prep "track" or curriculum option.

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* A number of these components have already been implemented in several districts and might simply need to be reviewed or "formalized."

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Planning Components (continued)

5. Develop and publish a Tech Prep Guide using existing academic and career/vocational courses and highlighting Technical Advanced Placement (TAP) opportunities for students. (Tech Prep guides should be modified each year as the district continues development/expansion of the Tech Prep program.)

6. Identify curriculum "gaps" between secondary and postsecondary levels by analyzing existing courses ("gaps" result in students needing remediation at the postsecondary level).

7. Establish a plan for closing curriculum gaps (i.e., sequentially raising skill levels in math, English and/or science) and adding applications from all Tech Prep cluster areas appropriately throughout grades 9 - 12. (Cluster areas are business, health, public service, and industrial/engineering technology.)

8. Identify ways that the district's Tech Prep program can be developed to effectively prepare students for all area two-year college occupational programs.

9. Identify methods of ensuring that Tech Prep students are not "locked in" (i.e., What options are possible for a Tech Prep student who changes his/her mind and decides to pursue a four-year college degree? How can flexibility be built into the Tech Prep program?)

10. Identify "curriculum overlaps" between secondary and postsecondary levels; ensure that the district is satisfied with the current articulation process and results of Technical Advanced Placement (TAP). (Articulation is the current process to identify overlaps and enables the awarding of Tri-County Technical College credit.)

11. Identify CORD courses that the district is willing/able to implement; identify reasonable timetable for implementation. (CORD courses include Principles of Technology I and II, Applied Communication, Applied Math I, and new courses under development---Applied Biology/Chemistry and Applied Math II.)

12. Identify courses for local curriculum development or enhancement; establish plan for development and realistic timetable; establish roles for district staff and PACE in curriculum development; identify appropriate ways of incorporating applications into academic courses.

Planning Components (continued)

13. Review materials and options for curriculum development that have been written by PACE staff, other local districts, or schools in other states; select appropriate options or materials for implementation.

14. Determine whether or not to add the new "Introduction to Technologies" course being developed by PACE staff or whether to incorporate components of the technologies course into the existing Pre-Vocation course. (Introduction to Technologies is being designed to familiarize students with career options associated with Tech Prep, to help students plan their academic and vocational course selections, and to develop study skills for academic success.)

15. Plan evaluation strategies; establish responsibilities for data collection and analyses.

16. Identify other components needed/desired to support the district's Tech Prep program and develop plan to meet needs. Examples could include:

    a. counseling components (i.e., advising Tech Prep students and increasing their understanding of the mid-level technology career options associated with Tech Prep) and training of school counselors;

    b. training and/or orientation of faculty;

    c. emphasizing that the school/district's Tech Prep program is on the forefront of a growing State and national movement;

    d. emphasizing that Tech Prep is a district/school initiative and ensuring that the appropriate image for the program is projected to faculty, staff, and students;

    e. conducting student/parent orientations (i.e, what is the Tech Prep "pay-off?" Why should students take Tech Prep and why should their parents support that decision?)

    f. identifying marketing issues and developing promotional and informational materials;

    g. promoting the two-year college occupational option and improving the image of selecting technical/two-year college training after high school;

    h. identifying an appropriate role for the middle and junior high schools in the district's Tech Prep program;

Planning Components (continued)

i. promoting vocational/occupational course selection by students thereby enabling them to build their "technology base" starting as early as the 9th grade;

j. developing coordinated co-op programs between secondary and postsecondary levels;

k. starting a Tech Prep scholarship program with local industries enabling students to pursue two-year college occupational training at the college of their choice.

Proposed Outcomes for Fully-Developed Tech Prep Programs

While recognizing that the needs, interests, and resources of each district will influence the final outcome of Tech Prep programs, it is suggested that "model" programs include:

1. A coordinated, sequenced program of academic and career/vocational courses starting in grade 9 and ending with students' successful entry into the work force, or their completion of a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or occupational associate degree.

2. Courses providing "general track" (Tech Prep) students with greater academic skills, "eliminating" the need for remediation at the postsecondary (two-year college) level.

3. New and/or enhanced academic courses involving applications from the targeted mid-level technology career clusters which will:

   a. increase the relevance of academic concepts by using "real world" applications;

   b. show how math, English, and science concepts are used by mid-level professionals in local businesses, industries, and health/public service agencies;

   c. increase students' motivation for learning academic concepts and skills;

   d. build career understanding components into the academic program;

   e. increase students' interest in taking vocational/occupational courses available at their school or career center.

4. Offering "Introduction to Technologies" in the 9th grade. The course will provide an orientation for Tech Prep students and will develop effective study and time management skills, increase career understanding, introduce vocational offerings, provide guidance in academic and vocational course selection, and increase students' self-esteem and expectations for success.

5. Availability of Tech Prep materials for students and parents describing academic and vocational course options and explaining what Tech Prep prepares students for in terms of postsecondary studies and careers.

Proposed Outcomes for Fully-Developed Tech Prep Programs (continued)

6. Effective counseling components ensuring proper advisement of Tech Prep students (including opportunities for technical advanced placement), providing current and accurate career information, and exposing students to information from the local business community (e.g., career options/educational requirements for entry-level positions).

7. On-going inservice opportunities for faculty and staff in areas related to the teaching and counseling of Tech Prep students.

8. Effective orientation activities for Tech Prep students and their parents.

9. Components for middle and junior high school students emphasizing exposure to (and general understanding of) mid-level technology careers so students will have a "frame of reference" for the Tech Prep curriculum option in high school.

10. A Tech Prep scholarship program for seniors supported by local businesses, administered by the district/school, and designed to support students in the pursuit of occupational training at the two-year college of their choice.

Suggested Overall Planning Goals for the 1989-90 School Year

In order to facilitate the development of Tech Prep programs throughout Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens County school districts, it is suggested that the following goals be reached:

1. Identify Tech Prep planning coordinators in all districts.

2. Establish appropriate roles and responsibilities of district/school coordinators and PACE staff in all districts.

3. Develop Tech Prep goals, planning outline, and implementation timetables for all districts.

4. Establish a target date in each district for full implementation.

TECH PREP PLANNING OUTLINE

I. ADMINISTRATIVE

A. Identify planning coordinators for Tech Prep at the district/school level.

B. Define roles for district/PACE staff in planning and development.

C. Identify desired program components (curriculum, counseling, other), set goals and timetables.

II. CURRICULUM

A. Identify existing academic/career courses that meet District's Tech Prep goals.

B. Identify curriculum "gaps" and "overlaps" between secondary/postsecondary levels

C. Identify appropriate/realistic curriculum development options:

1. adding CORD courses. (Principles of Technology, etc.)
2. enhancing general-level math, English, science.
3. adding/incorporating "Introduction to Technologies".
4. incorporating applications from technology areas into existing courses.

D. Identify ways of building flexibility into the program enabling students to switch from College Prep to Tech Prep and vice versa, when appropriate.

III. COUNSELING

A. Identify ways of involving counseling staff in program development, promotion, and orientation activities for students/parents.

B. Publish Tech Prep Guide using existing courses that show paths to postsecondary occupational programs and advanced placement options; modify guide as program develops.

C. Provide training and materials on Technical Advanced Placement, student options in mid-level technology careers, local career opportunities/trends, etc.

IV. OTHER PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A. Identify other components for development/inclusion that meet district goals:

1. Developing middle/junior high school activities preparing students for the Tech Prep option in high school.

2. Expanding career counseling activities through use of speakers from business career days, "shadowing" programs focusing on or including mid-level technology careers, etc.

3. Developing secondary/postsecondary cooperative education opportunities.

4. Establishing a Tech Prep scholarship program with local business/industry support.